



Picture US

A Collection of 30 Photographs for Classroom Use

GENERAL DIRECTIONS FOR USE

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Pictures are a very useful tool for language teaching and learning. They bring life and realism to lessons and motivate learners to produce language. The sizable format of these images makes them suitable for use in larger classes, and the sturdy material makes them functional for hands-on activities. The images are also appropriate for display.

POSSIBLE ACTIVITIES

The activities suggested in *Picture US* are intended to give instructors a point of departure for using the images in the classroom. The activities are general enough to be used with most, if not all, of the images in the collection. For each of the activities, it is a good idea to provide a model for the students before starting the activity for the first time.

Biographies

Intermediate/Advanced Classes Ask students to make up biographies of the people in the pictures. Each biography should mention age, family, occupation (work or school), interests and hobbies, etc.

Variation Each student or group of students can work on creating biographies for different pictures. Biographies could then be matched to the pictures through a speaking, listening, or reading exercise.

Captions

Have students match captions to photos or vice versa.

Variation Have students write their own captions for photos. Students can read aloud their captions (or write them on a paper), and have other students guess which photo the captions they wrote would match.

Categories

Use all photos from the collection. Have students propose four or five categories in which to group the photos. Emphasize to the students that there are many ways to sort the pictures, and that they will need to negotiate with each other to decide on the categories they wish to use (e.g., young children, pictures without a focus on people, group or individual activities). After students agree on the categories and sort the pictures, they can explain what each category is and why the selected pictures belong there.

Chain Story

Divide the class into groups of four to seven students. Select a picture that might lend itself to a detailed description or a story. Give an opening line to the description or story. The next student should repeat the opening line and add a sentence or phrase

to it (e.g., Teacher: *There is a bus.* Student #1: *There is a bus. The people are getting on the bus.*). Each student should repeat all the lines said prior to his/her turn and add something. At the end, the teacher or the first student could repeat the entire chain story.

Counting

Beginning Classes Select a picture with countable objects in it. Ask students to give an inventory of what they see in the picture.

Culture

Lead students through a discussion related to the picture. Possible approaches:

1. Elicit any information about the picture as it relates to life in the United States. Comments could be factual statements, personal opinions, or broader generalizations. Write key phrases on the board. Lead students through a discussion based on the statements made.
2. Present the caption to the students. Add any descriptive or factual information you might have or know about the topic.

Points of Departure

- Ask students to **compare (and contrast)** the subject matter and statements made about the subject matter as they relate to their own hometown or country.
- **Correct** any information within the statements (as needed) or set research homework for any comments that remain debatable.
- **Categorize** the type of statement made (fact, opinion, generalization). Discuss the three types of statements and the importance of knowing the difference among the three types.

Dialogue

Beginning Classes Write one side of a dialogue on the board based on a picture with people in it. Ask students to make up a dialogue with at least six lines.

Intermediate/Advanced Classes Have students work in pairs. Ask them to make up a dialogue with at least six lines and to practice it with their partner. When they feel confident, ask them to perform in front of the class.

In the Past/In the Future

Select two pictures that could represent the same person at two different times in life (a picture of a child and one of an adult). Use the pictures to have students speak/write about the person in the past and in the future. Students can add to the story.

Key Word: Word Study

Choose a vocabulary word or expression that could be related to the photo.

- What does it mean?
- Use it in a phrase.

- What is the translation in the students' language?
- If it is a single word, what does it rhyme with?
- What forms does it have?

Make Up a Story

Intermediate/Advanced Classes Have students work alone or in small groups. Ask them to make up a story about the picture.

Memory Game

Choose a picture. Ask students working alone or in small groups to look at the picture for 30 seconds. Put the picture face down. Have students write down everything they can remember from the picture.

Beginning Classes Ask them to use words or simple sentences.

Intermediate/Advanced Classes Ask them to write at least five sentences. The sentences may be about what is happening in the picture now, what they think happened before, or what they think will happen.

Variation Ask students to say what they remember instead of writing it down. Give them a few moments to make notes and organize their thoughts after looking at the picture.

Physical Description

Small Classes Put the pictures in the front of the room where everyone can see them. Give each picture a number and assign a picture to each student by its number. The students should not know which picture the other students are describing. Descriptions can be done orally or in writing. (If in writing, descriptions can be displayed around the room for students to circulate and read.) Students guess which picture fits the description they hear or read.

Large Classes Divide students into six groups. Give one picture to each group. The groups should not know which picture the other groups are describing. When they are finished preparing their description (in writing or for oral presentation), put the pictures in front of the room where everyone can see them. Give each picture a number. Groups read their descriptions. Remaining groups of students guess which picture fits the description they hear. (Again, see above for written descriptions.)

Beginning Classes Have students write a list of words and simple sentences to describe the selected picture or pictures.

Intermediate/Advanced Classes Have students write a paragraph to describe the selected picture or pictures.

Variation 1 Have students describe the clothing the people in the pictures are wearing. To make it more of a guessing game, there could be several pictures displayed and a student could describe one person. The remainder of the class could guess which person is being described.

Variation 2 Have students describe the character, personality, or mood of the person in the picture (instead of giving a physical description).

Picture Dictation

Whole Class Tell the students you are going to describe a picture to them and they are to draw it. Allow students to ask for clarification during the dictation.

Pair or Group Work Students describe the picture to their partners or group members, who draw pictures based on the descriptions given. When finished, pairs or groups compare their drawing to the original. Students swap roles.

Prepositions

Select a picture with several objects and/or people in it. Have students practice prepositions by explaining how the objects or people relate to one another (e.g., The man is talking in front of the people. The woman has a red cap on her head. There are two bottles of water on the table.).

Professions/Jobs

Beginning Classes Present and review professions/jobs that are illustrated in the pictures.

Intermediate/Advanced Classes Present and review professions/jobs that are illustrated in the pictures and elicit additional professions/jobs that might relate to the context of the picture. Students could also write sentences and paragraphs about a profession represented in the picture.

Q & A

Elicit information about the picture from students.

- What are they (is s/he) doing?
- What time of day is it? Why do you think so?
- Describe the mood. What makes you think this?

Round Robin Story

Write different opening lines for the picture on separate pieces of paper.

Small Classes Prepare one piece of paper for each student. Ask each student to add one line to the story and pass the paper on to the next person.

Large Classes Prepare one piece of paper for each group. Ask each group to work together and add one line to the story. When they are finished, the groups pass the paper on to the next group.

General Instructions All of the stories should have the same number of lines. Ten lines is a good length. Let the student (or a student in the group) who writes the final line read the story out loud.

Follow-up Ask each student to take a story home, edit it, and give it a title. Have students read their stories out loud the next day.

Variation (Small Classes) Write the opening line on the blackboard. Ask students to take turns adding lines out loud (instead of writing them down) until the story is finished. Add the lines on the blackboard.

Similarities

Take any two pictures and have students create sentences that describe 10 similarities between the two. The more dissimilar the pictures, the more creative students will need to be in generating sentences with similarities. This activity could be turned into a friendly competition, with groups getting points for coming up with similarities that are not repeated by the other groups.

Thought/Speech Balloons

Choose a picture with people in it. Elicit information about the situation and ask students to provide thought or speech balloons to indicate what the people are thinking/saying.

Variation Hand out different pictures to pairs to create the text balloons. After writing the balloons, pairs pass on the picture to another pair to continue the dialogue or “story.”

Titles

Beginning Classes Write three or more possible titles on the board for a selected picture. Ask students to choose the best title for the picture.

Intermediate/Advanced Classes Ask students to create a title for the picture. Write all the suggestions on the board. Let the class choose the best one. Have them give their reasons.

Twenty Questions

Display several pictures. “Select” one of the pictures (i.e., think of one of them) and have students ask yes/no questions to determine the picture you are thinking of.

Variation This can be done in groups too. Students take turns thinking of a picture and responding to the yes/no questions.

Vocabulary

Use the photos to introduce, practice, and reinforce vocabulary. Point to objects in the picture and elicit the words from the students, or present vocabulary words to the students using the image to make the meaning clear.

To practice or reinforce vocabulary, ask students to point at the part of the photo that relates to the vocabulary. Ask yes/no questions while pointing to parts of the picture. Students answer “yes” or “no.”

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Supermoon in Arches National Park

NATIONAL PARK SERVICE / JACOB W. FRANK / PUBLIC DOMAIN

The supermoon rises over "The Windows" in Arches National Park in Utah. Arches National Park is one of 423 national parks in the United States.



Metro in Washington, D.C.

GPA PHOTO ARCHIVE / U.S. DEPARTMENT OF STATE / CC BY-NC 2.0

Many cities in the United States have rapid transit systems for local travel. The trains may run in underground tunnels called a subway or above ground. The Washington Metro system, called the Metro, is the rapid transit system in Washington, D.C., and the surrounding areas of Maryland and Virginia. Many people commute to work using the Metro.



Independence Day in the USA

GPA PHOTO ARCHIVE / KEN WHITE / CC BY-NC 2.0

In the United States, many communities host a 4th of July parade to celebrate Independence Day. These children are showing their national pride by waving flags and wearing patriotic t-shirts.



Wind Farm in Central Illinois

GPA PHOTO ARCHIVE / TIM BROWN / CC BY-NC 2.0

This wind farm is located in central Illinois. Wind energy is a popular form of renewable energy.



Pennsylvania Farmland

GPA PHOTO ARCHIVE / CAROL M. HIGSMITH / CC BY-NC 2.0

This aerial view of Pennsylvania farmland is from the Mid-Atlantic region of the United States. There are 2.1 million farms across the United States.



College Graduation Day

GPA PHOTO ARCHIVE / TIM BROWN / CC BY-NC 2.0

This family celebrates graduation day at the George Washington University in Washington, D.C. Graduates commonly wear a long gown and a mortar board cap that matches their institution's theme colors.



Capital Pride Parade

GPA PHOTO ARCHIVE / TIM BROWN / CC BY-NC 2.0

The Capital Pride Parade takes place annually in Washington, D.C. This parade celebrates and supports LGBTQ+ individuals while also educating the community.



Activity in New York City

GPA PHOTO ARCHIVE / TIM BROWN / CC BY-NC 2.0

Police patrol the streets on horseback at Times Square, New York. Times Square is the hub of the Broadway theater district.



Spectacular Michigan Marching Band

GPA PHOTO ARCHIVE / TIM BROWN / CC BY-NC 2.0

Marching bands deliver entertainment and create excitement during "halftime" at American football games. The University of Michigan marching band takes its turn on the field.



The Democratic Process of Voting

GPA PHOTO ARCHIVE / KEN WHITE / CC BY-NC 2.0

During an election, registered voters go to a designated polling place to cast a vote. In this photo, a mother shows her children the voting process while she votes.



A Snowy Day

GPA PHOTO ARCHIVE / TIM BROWN / CC BY-NC 2.0

Pedestrians cross a snowbound street in Washington, D.C. On days when the snow is too heavy for school buses to travel, children often have a "snow day" when they do not go to school.



Looking through a Solar Telescope

NASA / AUBREY GEMIGNANI / CC BY-NC 2.0

A student looks through a solar telescope at an event to celebrate the fourth anniversary of Joining Forces, a program that provides support to service members, veterans, and their families, at the Vice President's residence in Washington, D.C., as part of the National Math and Science Initiative (NMSI). NMSI was formed to improve student performance in the critical subjects of science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM).



Artist Painting Cherry Blossoms

GPA PHOTO ARCHIVE / U.S. DEPARTMENT OF STATE / CC BY-NC 2.0

Passersby watch an artist at work beneath the cherry blossoms at the Tidal Basin in Washington, D.C. The cherry blossom trees located in Washington, D.C., were a gift of friendship from Japan. The first two trees were planted in 1912.



Rural Farm in Kansas

GPA PHOTO ARCHIVE / COREY COYLE / WIKIMEDIA COMMONS / CC BY 2.0

Agriculture is a major industry in the United States. This photo shows a rural farm in Kansas. The house and barns are surrounded by farmland. Farms in Kansas grow a lot of grain including sorghum and wheat.



Beach Cleanup Sculpture Made of Discarded Plastic

GPA PHOTO ARCHIVE / WASHEDASHORE.ORG / CC BY-NC 2.0

All of the plastic on this sculpture was collected from beaches by volunteers. Cleaning trash along the shore helps protect marine life.



Constructing a Wind Turbine

GPA PHOTO ARCHIVE / DOUGLAS BARNES / DEPARTMENT OF ENERGY / PUBLIC DOMAIN
This wind turbine is being constructed in a manufacturing plant in Jonesboro, Arkansas. Wind turbines are used to generate electricity. This is a popular form of renewable energy.



Historic Downtown Glasgow, Kentucky

NYTTEND / WIKIMEDIA COMMONS / PUBLIC DOMAIN
This building, in downtown Glasgow, Kentucky, resembles many historic buildings in smaller communities. Historical societies work to preserve these buildings for future generations.



Public Transportation

GPA PHOTO ARCHIVE / TIM BROWN / CC BY-NC 2.0
Buses are part of the Metro transit system in Washington, D.C. People often use buses to move around the city and to get to work. This bus carries a rack on the front for its passengers' bicycles. The bus is a "hybrid," meaning it is powered by a combination of electricity and petrol.



Martin Luther King, Jr. Memorial

GPA PHOTO ARCHIVE / TIM BROWN / CC BY-NC 2.0
The Martin Luther King, Jr. Memorial is located in West Potomac Park next to the National Mall in Washington, D.C. The Stone of Hope is made of granite and has the image of civil rights leader Martin Luther King, Jr. carved into it. In this photo, the memorial is surrounded by colorful trees during autumn.



Young Students Using Their Voices

GPA PHOTO ARCHIVE / CAROL M. HIGHSMITH / CC BY-NC 2.0
Young students and parents cheer on the fifth graders from Watkins Elementary School in Washington, D.C., as they recite Martin Luther King, Jr.'s "I Have a Dream" speech from the steps of the Lincoln Memorial.



Hiking the Pacific Crest Trail

GPA PHOTO ARCHIVE / BOB WICK / BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT / PUBLIC DOMAIN
This family is enjoying a hike on the scenic Pacific Crest Trail. Hiking is a great way to get exercise and enjoy nature.



Volunteer Reading with Children

GPA PHOTO ARCHIVE / GABRIELLE SPRADLING / U.S. AIR FORCE / PUBLIC DOMAIN
This serviceman is reading to children at a child development center. This center helps develop early literacy skills among children from lower-income families.



Coastal Cleanup Day in Washington, D.C.

GPA PHOTO ARCHIVE / GWEN BAUSMITH / ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY / PUBLIC DOMAIN
Community service is a valued way to give back to one's community. These youth are volunteering during International Coastal Cleanup Day in Washington, D.C., to make their local environment a more pleasant place for all.



Parasports in the USA

DOD NEWS / EJ HERSOM / CC BY 2.0
Parasports are sports played by persons with disabilities. Some sports are adaptations of traditional sports, while other sports are specifically created for individuals with disabilities.



Reporters Asking Questions at a Press Conference

GPA PHOTO ARCHIVE / GLENN FAWCETT / DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE / PUBLIC DOMAIN
Members of the press raise their hands to ask questions during a press conference. The Constitution of the United States allows for freedom of speech, and journalists take advantage of this right.



Food and Drug Research in Jefferson, Arkansas

GPA PHOTO ARCHIVE / MICHAEL J. ERMARTH / FOOD AND DRUG ADMINISTRATION / PUBLIC DOMAIN
This Food and Drug Administration research center is located in Jefferson, Arkansas. This research center ensures the safety and security of food, medicines, and cosmetics produced in the United States.



Youth Beginning Their College Experience

GPA PHOTO ARCHIVE / TIM WEBB / BEREA COLLEGE / CC BY 2.0
Incoming freshmen students are excited to start their classes at Berea College in Kentucky. Many college students move to campus and live in a dormitory with other incoming students.



Park Ranger Educating Campers

REDWOOD NATIONAL AND STATE PARKS / JOHN CHAO / PUBLIC DOMAIN
These campers are listening to a lecture from a park ranger. Camping in a tent and cooking over a fire are popular recreational activities for many Americans.



Fishing Boats in a Harbor in Chatham, Massachusetts

GPA PHOTO ARCHIVE / BRIAN MORRIS / MASSACHUSETTS OFFICE OF TRAVEL & TOURISM / CC BY-ND 2.0
Chatham is located at the southeast tip of Cape Cod and known as a fishing community. It is also a popular tourist location in the summer.



NASA Astronauts

GPA PHOTO ARCHIVE / NASA / CC BY-NC-ND 2.0
NASA astronauts work on their U.S. spacesuits ahead of a spacewalk. Women are increasingly pursuing careers in science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM).